

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs ■ MEPA Office

ENF

Environmental Notification Form

For Office Use Only Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
EOE No.: <i>14097</i> MEPA Analyst: <i>Aisling Eglinton</i> Phone: 617-626- <i>1024</i>

The information requested on this form must be completed to begin MEPA Review in accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, 301 CMR 11.00.

Project Name: Haverhill-Merrimack River Walkway (Task A and Task B)		
Street: Project is off-street. Will form a circular route on the North and South Side of the Merrimack River between the Comeau Bridge and the Basiliere Bridge/Route 125. Nearby streets include Washington Street, Wall Street, Middlesex Street, So. Prospect St., and So. Elm Street.		
Municipality: City of Haverhill	Watershed: Merrimack	
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 329393N, 4737620W – UTM Zone 19	Latitude: 42° 46' 19.68" N	Longitude: 71° 05' 07.42" W
Estimated commencement date: Task A: 2008 Task B: Unknown	Estimated completion date: Task A: 2008 Task B: Unknown	
Approximate cost: Task A: \$1.6 million; Task B: \$8 million (estimated)	Status of project design: Task A: 70% Task B: 20 %complete	
Proponent: The City of Haverhill, Engineering Department		
Street: City Hall, Room 214, 4 Summer Street		
Municipality: Haverhill	State: MA	Zip Code: 01830
Name of Contact Person From Whom Copies of this ENF May Be Obtained: Mary Ellen Radovanic, AICP		
Firm/Agency: Earth Tech, Inc.	Street: 300 Baker Ave., Suite 290	
Municipality: Concord	State: MA	Zip Code: 01742
Phone: (978) 371-4000	Fax: (978) 371-2468	E-mail: maryellen.radovanic@earthtech.com

Does this project meet or exceed a mandatory EIR threshold (see 301 CMR 11.03)?
 Yes No

Has this project been filed with MEPA before?
 Yes (EOEA No. 11665 in 1998) No

Has any project on this site been filed with MEPA before?
 Yes (EOEA No. _____) No

Is this an Expanded ENF (see 301 CMR 11.05(7)) requesting:
 a Single EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.06(8)) Yes No
 a Special Review Procedure? (see 301CMR 11.09) Yes No
 a Waiver of mandatory EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.11) Yes No
 a Phase I Waiver? (see 301 CMR 11.11) Yes No

Identify any financial assistance or land transfer from an agency of the Commonwealth, including the agency name and the amount of funding or land area (in acres):

Task A: EOT Enhancements Funding - \$130,000 for design; Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program - \$1.5 mill. for construction; Task B: Unknown.

Are you requesting coordinated review with any other federal, state, regional, or local agency?
 Yes (Specify _____) No

List Local or Federal Permits and Approvals:

Task A: City of Haverhill Conservation Commission/Order of Conditions (OOC). Task B: Haverhill/OOC, DEP/Chapter 91 License, ACOE/Section 10 (General).

Which ENF or EIR review threshold(s) does the project meet or exceed (see 301 CMR 11.03):

FOR Task A: Wetlands, Waterways & Tidelands; Task B: Unknown

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land | <input type="checkbox"/> Rare Species | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wetlands, Waterways, & Tidelands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water | <input type="checkbox"/> Wastewater | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Air | <input type="checkbox"/> Solid & Hazardous Waste |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ACEC | <input type="checkbox"/> Regulations | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical & Archaeological Resources |

Summary of Project Size & Environmental Impacts	Existing	Change	Total	State Permits & Approvals
LAND				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Order of Conditions (Task A and B) <input type="checkbox"/> Superseding Order of Conditions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chapter 91 License (Task B only) <input type="checkbox"/> 401 Water Quality Certification <input type="checkbox"/> MHD or MDC Access Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Water Management Act Permit <input type="checkbox"/> New Source Approval <input type="checkbox"/> DEP or MWRA Sewer Connection/ Extension Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Other Permits (including Legislative Approvals) – Specify:
Total site acreage	A: 1.3 acres B: ~1.7 acres Total: 3 acres			
New acres of land altered		A: 0. B: 1.1 acres		
Acres of impervious area	A: 1.3 acres B: 0 Total: 1.3	A: 0 B: 0.8 acres Total: 0.8	A: 1.3 acres B: 0.8 acres Total: 2.1	
Square feet of new bordering vegetated wetlands alteration		A: 0 B: 0		
Square feet of new other wetland alteration		A: 1.3 acres B: ~1.7 acres Total: 3 acres		
Acres of new non-water dependent use of tidelands or waterways		A: 0 acres B: 0 acres		
STRUCTURES				
Gross square footage	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Number of housing units	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Maximum height (in feet)	n/a	n/a	n/a	
TRANSPORTATION				
Vehicle trips per day	A: B: 0	A: B: ~100 (weekends /seasonal)	A: B: ~100	
Parking spaces	A: 80 B: 0	A: -3 B: 15 (estimated)	A: 77 B: 15 (estimated)	

WATER/WASTEWATER			
Gallons/day (GPD) of water use	n/a	n/a	n/a
GPD water withdrawal	n/a	n/a	n/a
GPD wastewater generation/ treatment	n/a	n/a	n/a
Length of water/sewer mains (in miles)	n/a	n/a	n/a

CONSERVATION LAND: Will the project involve the conversion of public parkland or other Article 97 public natural resources to any purpose not in accordance with Article 97?

Yes (Specify _____) No

Will it involve the release of any conservation restriction, preservation restriction, agricultural preservation restriction, or watershed preservation restriction?

Yes (Specify _____) No

RARE SPECIES: Does the project site include Estimated Habitat of Rare Species, Vernal Pools, Priority Sites of Rare Species, or Exemplary Natural Communities?

Yes (Specify DFW has identified bald Eagle and Shortnose Sturgeon, both listed as endangered, in the vicinity of the site. See Attachment 5.) No

HISTORICAL /ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES: Does the project site include any structure, site or district listed in the State Register of Historic Place or the inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth?

Yes (Specify A small portion of the project is within the Washington St. Historic Shoe District; Three archaeological sites are in the vicinity of (but not within) the project area.) No

If yes, does the project involve any demolition or destruction of any listed or inventoried historic or archaeological resources?

Yes (Specify _____) No

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN: Is the project in or adjacent to an Area of Critical Environmental Concern?

Yes (Specify _____) No

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project description should include (a) a description of the project site, (b) a description of both on-site and off-site alternatives and the impacts associated with each alternative, and (c) potential on-site and off-site mitigation measures for each alternative (You may attach one additional page, if necessary.)

The City of Haverhill, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Highway Department, proposes to improve and expand the Merrimack River Walkway in downtown Haverhill. The walkway will be a 2.5 mile loop when completed, circling the Merrimack River between the Upper County /Joseph C. Comeau Bridge (currently under reconstruction) and the Basiliere Bridge (Route 125). The proposed development will occur in two phases, described in this ENF as Task A and Task B. The project purpose is to increase visual and recreational access to the river, encourage pedestrian activity, and to establish the walkway as a downtown destination. Drawing people into the city to live, work or visit fuels economic development opportunities and provides funds to continue efforts to redevelop historic buildings, and to integrate historically consistent amenities within the urban landscape. The City of Haverhill is coordinating the design of the project. MassHighway will review and approve the project design, advertise for construction bids, and oversee the actual construction work.

A similar River Walkway project was proposed about ten years ago (EOEA No. 11665) but never constructed. Attachment 5 includes the Secretary's Certificate, which did not require preparation of an EIR. MEPA staff requested that a new ENF be submitted given the length of time since the previous filing, the design changes, and the phased approach of the current project.

TASK A: The first phase of the Haverhill –Merrimack River Walkway project, also referred to as the Riverwalk Gateway, involves renovation of an existing parking lot in the rear of 130 Washington Street (referred to as "the TAP parking lot"). As part of the renovation, a new 300-foot long segment of Riverwalk will be installed on the parking lot surface behind an existing 3-foot high flood wall. The new walkway will be 12-foot wide decking separated from the existing TAP parking lot by a landscaped segment. The new walkway will connect to the existing walkway and public dock in the adjacent (existing) Riverfront Park. The TAP parking lot will be graded and repaved, and a new catch basin and new stormwater management structure installed. The City will improve amenities in Riverside Park by installing a new bocce court, bandstand and swing set area. An existing 280-foot walkway behind the Haverhill Cooperative Bank and adjacent City parking lot will be redecked to replace worn timbers and upgrade the railing to current safety standards. The schedule for Task A calls for design completion by September 2007, with construction likely the following spring.

TASK B: The second phase of the proposed project will expand the River Walkway to a 2.5 mile loop circling the Merrimack River between the Upper County /Joseph C. Comeau Bridge and the Basiliere Bridge (Route 125). On the north side of the river, the walkway will begin just east of Riverfront Park as a 12-foot boardwalk cantilevered 10 feet over the river for approximately 3,000 linear feet and anchored by the existing floodwall. This 24-foot high floodwall was constructed by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1935 to prevent flooding downtown during storm events. The 100-year flood elevation along the wall is 23 feet. The landward area immediately adjacent to the flood wall is heavily developed. Existing conditions include roads, structures and paved areas used for service access, storage and some parking. The recreational space created by the Task B portion of the walkway will allow a connection between downtown Haverhill and the Merrimack River, which has been visually and physically blocked by the high floodwall for the past 72 years. Pedestrian access will be facilitated by well marked street connections, an essential component of flow and safety, and will also encourage economic benefit to businesses along the route.

Crossing the Basiliere Bridge to the south side of the Merrimack River in Bradford, the 12-foot walkway will likely be within the right of way (ROW) of the abandoned rail line running parallel to the river bank, although the specific route has not been identified. The rail bed is still somewhat defined, although vegetation, including invasive species like Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) is emergent. The ROW is sufficiently upland to avoid any impacts to Bordering Vegetated Wetland or Bank. Land use adjacent to the project site on the Bradford side is primarily residential, interspersed with some small businesses and manufacturing/commercial uses close to the old railroad bed. The City is currently engaged in negotiations with the property owners (Pan Am Railroad) to purchase this RR corridor.

Alternatives Analysis

No-Build Scenario: Under the no-build alternative the existing TAP parking lot will continue to be used only for parking and untreated sheet runoff of stormwater will continue, to the river's detriment. No enhancements to Riverfront Park will be implemented. The existing planked walkway will not be maintained and the railings will remain out of compliance with current safety standards. No river walkway loop will be developed. The floodwall will remain a visual and physical barrier to the Merrimack River on the downtown side, and on the Bradford side the abandoned railroad bed will continue to revegetate with invasive species. Ownership will remain private thus the land will have no public recreational opportunities and could be sold and privately developed. This scenario does not take advantage of the natural beauty and recreational opportunities offered by the river. The no-build scenario also has potential secondary impacts to economic development and possibly historic resources, by making the city less desirable as a destination.

Build Scenario: The purpose of the project is to enhance and expand the existing riverfront amenities to provide public access and recreational opportunities along the Merrimack River. Under the build alternative, the completion of Tasks A and B result in a 2.5 mile loop of public walkway and create a downtown destination. The proposed project will allow pedestrian connections to the water, as well as encourage commercial development supportive of foot traffic. The project will connect the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority bus station, downtown bus stops, and the Haverhill MBTA station; it is also within walking distance from the Bradford MBTA Station. The project is consistent with the City of Haverhill's ongoing efforts to stimulate downtown activity, economic growth, and preserve the historic structures and character of downtown. It is also consistent with discussions generated at EOEEA's UrbanRiver Visions Charette, held in Haverhill on March 31, 2007.

TASK A: No significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated from Task A. Work will occur within the 100-year floodplain and Riverfront Area, however no significant adverse impacts to flood storage capacity are anticipated. During construction there may be some temporary noise and emissions associated with paving equipment, but these impacts will be temporary, and work will be limited to normal daytime hours (~7 a.m. to 4 p.m.). A Reconnaissance Survey to assess the potential for adverse impacts to historic and prehistoric resources is ongoing. Preliminary information indicates that the Task A activities will occur in previously disturbed areas, and no adverse effects to historic or prehistoric resources are anticipated. No adverse impacts to species of special status identified in the project vicinity are anticipated. Slight improvements in water quality due to new stormwater treatment prior to discharge in the Merrimack River may benefit the Shortnose Sturgeon by improving habitat, and the Bald Eagle for whom the river is a critical food source. The project provides a benefit to open space and recreational opportunities in the community by adding the new walkway, improving Riverside Park and updating the existing walkway. Although three parking spots will be eliminated at the TAP lot to develop the river walkway, downtown parking facilities (including a proposed garage) are expected to provide adequate public parking.

Task B: Potential adverse impacts associated with the project include temporary noise and truck traffic during installation. Potential impacts to wetland resource areas (including flood zones) and special status species will be assessed through the NOI process, but are not expected to be significant due to sensitive design and the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures. On the city side of the Riverwalk, which involves cantilevered walkways, the walkway will be pre-built and then lifted onto the wall for installation to minimize the possibility of construction debris entering the river. Natural Heritage will receive a copy of this ENF and the NOI. The City will undertake any necessary biological assessments, particularly with regard to field investigations to identify potential Bald Eagle habitat on the Bradford side of the river, although it's unlikely that trees large enough to support a Bald Eagle's nest are within the old railroad ROW. No adverse impacts to the Shortnose Sturgeon are expected. Project benefits include additional open space and recreation areas for the community; improved visual access to the river, and increased opportunities to expand public art, cultural interpretation, festivals and outdoor markets. Parking on the Bradford side can be accommodated by existing off-street parking and the Bradford MBTA garage, however some dedicated parking is likely to be developed (estimated 15 spaces) but may be gravel/unpaved. The cantilevered Riverwalk is considered permeable in that the planked surface will allow drainage; the walkway on the Bradford side will be a 10-foot paved pathway with a 2-foot gravel border on each side to allow stormwater infiltration.

Mitigation for Build Scenario: Standard mitigation measures for work in wetland resource areas (e.g., siltation barriers and hay bales) will be implemented as appropriate during construction to minimize the potential for indirect water quality or erosion impacts and protect wetland and habitat resources. Historical and archaeological sites will be identified to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts. Stormwater along the Bradford side will be directed to the gravel border running alongside the walkway. Trash receptacles will be placed alongside the Riverwalk at appropriate intervals. Lighting and other design features will be evaluated for design consistency and safety. Facilities will be maintained by the City.